



Phase 3 Away Elective Guide

Please review this guide in its entirety & use the [checklist](#) at the end to ensure success!

Away Elective Options

Students must have a passing Step 1 score to register for any away electives.

Phase 3 of medical school can consist of **up to four optional** away electives (unless otherwise restricted), including Global Health and VSLO or non-VSLO. Students must be in **good academic standing** to participate in away electives.

Students are responsible for ensuring that MCW receives a copy of the [final course evaluation](#) so that elective credit is received. When the final grade is available, it will be added to MCWconnect and will reflect the final grade on the student's MCW transcript.

Away electives must be 4 weeks in length to receive academic credit, with exceptions below:

Approved institutions with accepted 3-week electives:

- Cedars Sinai Medical Center
- Mayo
- UCLA
- University of Minnesota

To register for an away elective, you must add the below course(s) to your schedule in MCWconnect prior to the add/drop deadline. If the **away elective dates do not match with MCW block dates**, you will need to **schedule IPD, vacation, a research elective, or an online elective** to avoid interference with another course. If you're unable to add one of those, you must check with your course instructor(s) to ensure accommodation can be made to overlap with your away dates. They may deny this request, and your away elective would need to be dropped.

- AWAY 47201 - Away Elective 1
- AWAY 47202 - Away Elective 2
- AWAY 47203 - Away Elective 3
- AWAY 47204 - Away Elective 4

After registering, fill out the [Away Elective Acceptance Form](#) to ensure you receive credit!

Global Health Electives

Start planning for a Global Health Elective 10 months in advance!

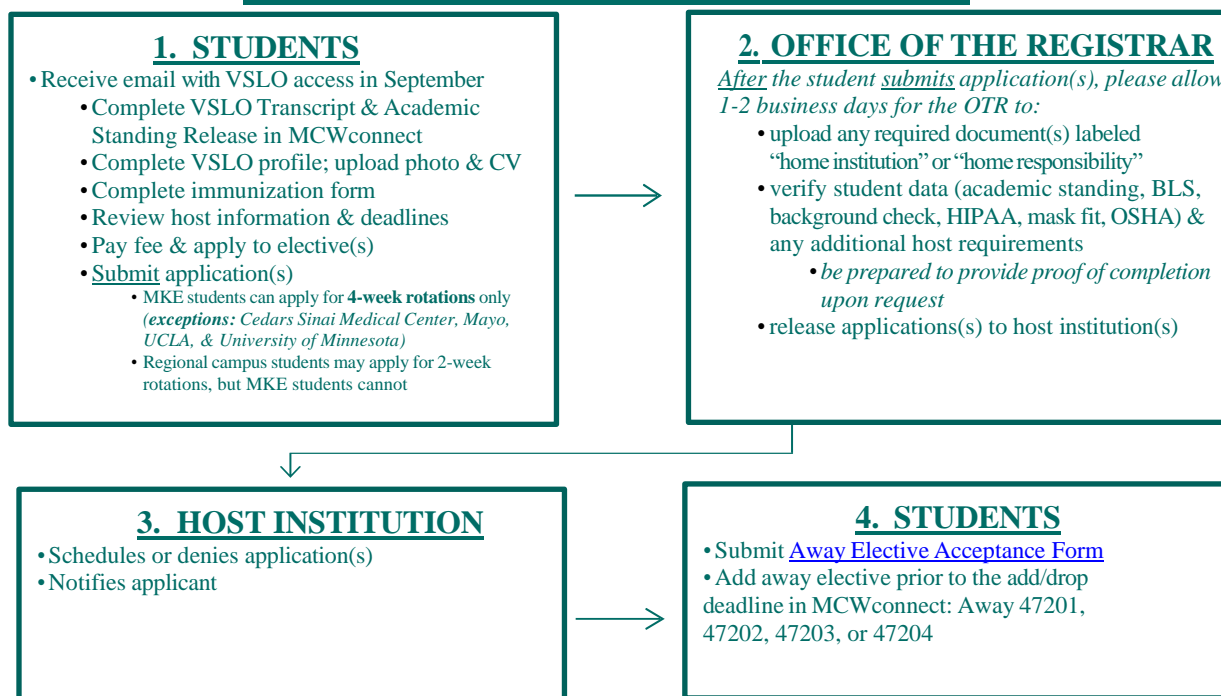
View [Global Health Elective](#) resources and contact **Tiffany Frazer** (tfrazer@mcw.edu) to get started.

VSLO & Non-VSLO Electives

Although institutions accept applications throughout the year, the majority accept them in March/April and process applications in April/May.

- Visit [VSLO for the list of participating institutions](#)
- [How to use the VSLO Application Service](#)
- Students who wish to pursue an away opportunity that is non-AAMC or non-VSLO approved must complete a [non-VSLO form](#) for consideration at least 60 days prior to the proposed start date.

VSLO Application Process



Away Elective Checklist

Use this checklist to assist with the steps to set up an away rotation!

Before your VSLO application will be released to the host institution, the Office of the Registrar must verify the following information, so be sure to complete these steps in advance.

REQUIRED STEPS

- ☐ In September, open your VSLO email invite link & log in **within 28 days, or it will expire.**
- ☐ Submit “yes” to one-question survey in MCWconnect for **VSLO Transcript & Academic Standing Release**
 - MCWconnect Self-Service card > Open Student Dashboard > Important Questions to Answer > “Do you authorize MCW to release your academic standing & official transcript to VSLO?”
- ☐ **Basic Life Support (BLS) Training:** eCard from American Heart Association (eCards@heart.org) came to your MCW email upon completion OR access your AHA eCard online: <https://ecards.heart.org/student/myecards> or CastleBranch. Ensure BLS will not expire before your away elective. Complete a BLS renewal course if needed. Contact Hannah Fuhrman for BLS questions.
- ☐ **Criminal Background Check:** results are found in your [CastleBranch](#) account. Need an updated background check? Contact Kursten Librizzi: klibrizzi@mcw.edu | 414-955-8279. Some institutions, such as Stanford, require a background check within the last two years; research the requirements for your application(s) & order an updated check as needed.
- ☐ **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Training:** Ensure completion in Brightspace Fall 2025: INTE-22200-080 – Thriving During Clerkship> Assessments> Quizzes> HIPAA Attestation.
- ☐ **Mask Fit Test:** If you have not completed one, contact Occupational Health - IOHFroedtert@Froedtert.com / 414-805-7997 to schedule, & send proof of completion to acadreg@mcw.edu. Some institutions, such as Stanford, require mask fit test certification to be within 12 months before the end of the elective clerkship.
- ☐ **Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)/Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) Training:** Ensure completion in Brightspace Fall 2025: INTE-22200-080 – Thriving During Clerkship> Assessments> Quizzes> BBP Attestation.

SUPPLEMENTAL VSLO DOCUMENTS

- ☐ **Affiliation Agreement:** MCW does *not* require an agreement for MCW students to rotate at other institutions. If the host institution you're applying to *requires* one or is inquiring if we already have one in place, email acadreg@mcw.edu. We *do* accept the AAMC Uniform Clinical Training Affiliation Agreement.
- ☐ **Drug Screening:** contact Occupational Health - IOHFroedtert@Froedtert.com | 414-805-7997.
- ☐ **Evaluation Form/End-of-Clerkship Evaluation:** Host institution must send to acadreg@mcw.edu within 30 days after the completion of your rotation.
- ☐ **Health Insurance Coverage (MCW):** contact Student Health and Wellness – student_health@mcw.edu.
- ☐ **Immunization Records:** online request for Immunization Records from Occupational Health: <https://infoscope.mcw.edu/Occupational-Health/Forms/Medical-Student-Away-Elective-Health-Forms.htm>. Questions? contact Occupational Health - IOHFroedtert@Froedtert.com | 414-805-7997.
- ☐ **Letter of Good Standing/Letter of Support from Dean or Registrar:** if the VSLO requirement says “home responsibility” or “home institution” next to it, the Office of the Registrar will be automatically notified ***AFTER*** you submit your application, & we will upload the letter for you. You do ***NOT*** need to request it from the Office of the Registrar. If you need a letter for a non-VSLO application, or the VSLO requirement is labeled as the “applicant’s responsibility” then email your request to acadreg@mcw.edu
- ☐ **Letter of Recommendation:** your letter writer (or their support staff) must send your letter to acadreg@mcw.edu to be uploaded to VSLO. *We do not accept letters emailed from students. If you need a copy of your letter, please request one from your letter writer; do not request a copy of your letter from the Office of the Registrar.*
- ☐ **Malpractice Insurance/Medical Liability Coverage:** download the “MCW Medical Student Certificate of Professional Liability” from Risk Management - <https://infoscope.mcw.edu/Risk-Management/Certificates-of-Insurance.htm>. Coverage is no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$3,000,000 annual aggregate. This *cannot* be increased.
- ☐ **O.R. Basics/Scrub Training:** completed in your surgery clerkship (INTE 23302). If proof is required, email proof to acadreg@mcw.edu to be uploaded to VSLO. If you are unable to show proof, contact Catherine Fihn cfihn@mcw.edu to verify that you completed the training.
- ☐ **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** completed in surgery clerkship (INTE 23302). If proof is required, email proof to acadreg@mcw.edu to be uploaded to VSLO.
- ☐ **Transcript:** Most host institutions label the transcript requirement a “home institution” responsibility which means the Office of the Registrar will automatically upload it ***AFTER*** you submit your VSLO application; you do not need to request it. If the transcript requirement is labeled an “applicant” requirement, use MCWconnect to request your unofficial or official transcript to be uploaded by the student.
- ☐ **USMLE Step 1 Score Report:** request USMLE transcript online <https://www.usmle.org/transcripts/>. The Office of the Registrar does *not* have your Step 1 score report or transcript. *We only have your score.*

Once you accept an away rotation in VSLO:

- ☐ Submit the [Away Elective Acceptance form](#) for your away elective **30 days prior to your elective starting.**
- ☐ The [Student Evaluation for Away Clinical Elective form](#) will be sent to your email with instructions prior to the start of your elective. We require that our grade evaluation form (*or the host institution’s preferred grade evaluation form*) is completed and returned within 30 days of the course end date.
- The host institution must submit the evaluation to acadreg@mcw.edu for you to receive credit.
 - Note: if you are working with multiple preceptors, only **ONE evaluation** form should be submitted with **ONE final grade**. Each preceptor you work with may add individual comments on the form, but we do NOT accept multiple evaluation forms or multiple grades.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **I'm not able to access VSLO. It says I need to contact the school. What should I do?** If you did not log in prior to the link expiring, please email acadreg@mcw.edu to request VSLO access.
2. **I still have my VSLO access from last year, prior to a leave of absence; do I need a new one or can I use the same VSLO access?** If you already have VSLO access, continue to use that.
3. **What data do you have about VSLO?** Please visit [AAMC's VSLO Student Infographic](#).
4. **I need access to CastleBranch, but I'm having trouble logging in. What should I do?** Your username is your student email, and you can try resetting the password by selecting "forgot password." Otherwise, please contact CastleBranch directly: <https://discover.castlebranch.com/student-candidate-support/>.
5. **I'm having issues with VSLO. Who should I contact?** [Use this VSLO Contact Form](#) or call (202) 478-9878 Monday – Friday 7am – 5pm Central Time.
6. **I just received a grade in my clerkship that will help my away application. Can you update my transcript in VSLO?** Yes, email acadreg@mcw.edu to request an updated transcript to appear for all current and future applications. *Note: if some host institutions have already viewed the transcript, there's no guarantee that the updated transcript will be viewed.*
7. **An away rotation application is asking for a core clerkship evaluation with the final grade. How do I access my clerkship evaluation with a final grade on the same report?** The OASIS clerkship evaluation does not include a final grade, as final grades are not posted in OASIS, only the clinical component scores. To get the final grade, students should run an unofficial transcript through MCWconnect and attach to the clerkship evaluation.
8. **Where should my end-of-clerkship evaluation be sent?** The Office of the Registrar's main inbox: acadreg@mcw.edu
9. **An away rotation is requiring ACLS (Advanced Cardiac Life Support), but MCW doesn't provide this training. How do I fulfill this requirement?** MCW does not offer ACLS, only BLS. If you are seeking ACLS training, we suggest you connect with APHEwisconsin.com for ACLS training options.
10. **I need someone to complete the "Stanford University School of Medicine Visiting Student Elective Clerkship Application Dean's Statement" form. Who can help me with this?** Complete the following requirements and send all documentation along with the Dean's Statement form to acadreg@mcw.edu
 - OSHA & BBP training within the past 12 months
 - BLS certification within the past 2 years
 - Criminal background check within the past 2 years
 - Mask fit test certification within 12 months prior to the end of the planned away elective
11. **The host institution is requiring a more extensive background check than the one I've completed through MCW, how do I get one that meets their standard?** If MCW's required background check is not sufficient, first try to work with the away rotation site to obtain the necessary background check. If they can't assist, complete a national check through the FBI:
 1. Go to FBI.gov/checks
 2. Request Electronic history summary check
 3. Student pays \$18
 4. Complete fingerprint process at local police station
 5. Results are anticipated to be available 10-15 days from the time the fingerprints are received

- 12. The away rotation dates at MCW are different than the ones I'm applying to; is that okay?** If the away elective dates do not match with MCW block dates, you will need to schedule IPD, vacation, a research elective, or an online course around either side of the dates to be able to enroll & avoid interference with other scheduled courses. For example, if MCW Block 7 is from January 5 – February 1, but your away rotation is January 12 – February 6, you will need to place vacation, IPD, research, or an online course in block 8 to cover the overlap. If that's not possible, you must inform the course instructors of whichever course you register for to ensure they approve, and make arrangements as needed for any missed time.
- 13. My away rotation application is due tomorrow; can you finalize everything on your end right now?** While we make our best effort to assist students, please allow us 1-2 business days to complete home institution requirements before releasing your application to the host institution. Please anticipate additional time if you have not completed one of the requirements such as an updated background check and/or if the host institution has additional or non-standard requirements.
- 14. I need extra insurance coverage to cover the gap between MCW's \$1 million/\$3million. What do I do?** MCW doesn't facilitate support with purchasing extra insurance coverage to cover the gaps. However, AAMC has a resource under "Malpractice/Liability Insurance" on [their site](#) that links to [AMPI with information for medical students](#). Additionally, Jon Wertz, Director of Clinical Risk Management at MCW, recommends that students ask the host institution what insurance coverage their students utilize, and hopefully they would have insight into how you can apply for coverage through their insurance. Please note that MCW cannot raise the coverage limits to meet your host institution's requirements. Sheridan Ryan, Associate Director of Clinical Risk Management at MCW, states, "the MCW self-insurance program follows rules set by the WI legislature and approved by the WI commissioner of insurance." No adjustments to MCW's insurance coverage can be made.
- 15. My family member/friend/etc. wants me to rotate with them during my vacation month or during winter break; can I do that? Will I be covered by insurance?** If you decide to pursue a rotation that is not for elective credit, MCW's malpractice insurance does not cover you. Students are only covered when earning academic credit on an approved rotation; otherwise, you must purchase your own liability insurance.
- 16. How will the away elective appear on my transcript? Will it show the various locations around the country?** Transcripts do not include the location of courses. For an Away elective, it only states the Away course number and the specialty of the elective (for example, AWAY 47201: Plastic Surgery), which is similar to how other MCW courses are identified on a transcript (for example, PMRE 47201: Brain Injury).
- 17. Does my transcript show only the courses I've completed or does it also include the ones I'm registered for?** Your transcript will show completed courses and any courses you're registered for, labeled with the heading "IN PROGRESS WORK".
- 18. I'm applying to a host institution in Colorado. How do I know if they require Workers Compensation coverage? Does MCW provide that?** No. MCW *does not* provide Workers Compensation coverage to its students – only to employees. Please check directly with the host institution to inquire if the coverage is required and determine if the away elective is possible.
- 19. An away institution is asking for a National Provider Identifier (NPI). Should I fill out the application to get an NPI?** Please visit [AAMC's article titled "Do Medical Students, Interns, and Residents Need National Provider Identifiers?"](#) which states "all health care providers are eligible for NPIs and may apply for them. Because medical students, interns, residents and fellow are health care providers, they are eligible for NPIs."